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Newsletter of the United Church of Christ

Vol. 24, No. 7, September 1989

Property of
Graduate Theological Union

ISSN 0361-8668



UCC Seminary Enrollment Up

AUG 23 1989

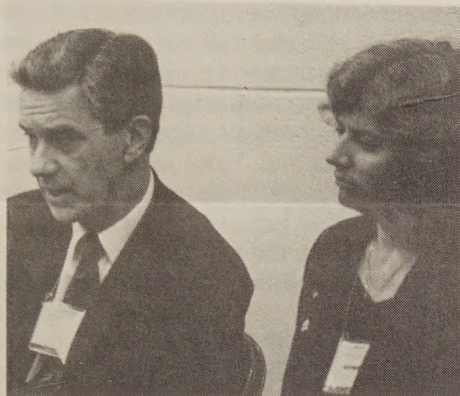
UCC seminary student enrollment is up, with most of the increase occurring at the UCC-related schools in a reversal of a three-year downward trend.

In its annual survey of UCC students at the Association of Theological Schools seminars, the Office for Church Life and Leadership found total enrollment rose more than 6% from 1,064 to 1,132 between 1988 and 1989, with UCC students at 71 of the association's 136 schools. UCC-related schools, which enroll 66% of UCC seminarians, experienced a 7% increase from 702 to 751 students.

Overall M. Div. enrollments rose slightly for the first time since 1982 from 4 to 707. The largest number of UCC M. Div. students, 110, can be found at Antiochian Newton Theological School.

The biggest change has been in the gender of student. The number of women in M. Div. candidates increased 16.5%, with women now composing 56% of such students. Minorities, who make up 13% of M. Div. students, rose 53.3%, though might attend a school not reporting in '88. According to Thomas R. Tupper, OCLL executive associate, these demographic changes are the most dramatic. Among UCC seminarians, women now approach almost half the UCC student body and minority students in all programs increased their numbers by more than a quarter since last year.

Despite the increases, Mr. Tupper warns it is difficult to gauge whether the number of clergy projected to graduate will be adequate for the future. Among variables are the number of clergy taking nonparish jobs and mismatches between ministry requirements of graduates and parishes. If estimates are accurate about the rate of new ordinations and clergy seeking parish jobs and if projections are a course that about one-third of current clergy will retire by the year 2000, then, he says, supply and demand for ministers should be roughly equal.



New seminary graduate treasurer-elect Doris Powell, shown with president-elect Paul Sherry, is typical of today's seminarian--a woman & second-career student. (Photo by Steven Mack)

New 'Ministry' Resources Offer Tips for Clergy

If pastors want to be caring ministers, they must take good care of themselves, says the *In Support of Ordained Ministry* resource series published by the UCC Office for Church Life and Leadership.

What are some things pastors can do to "keep their sense of call alive"? Take time for spiritual growth, plan vacations well in advance, get enough sleep and seek out mentors, suggests "Maintaining Vitality While Serving in a Parish Ministry," one of the series' four booklets.

Carefully prepare your ministerial profile, advises "When a Pastor Seeks a New Place for Ministry." And don't get discouraged, the booklet warns, for the search process often is "long and demanding," and you will experience disappointment as well as anticipation.

The series also contains "Planning for Retirement" and "Getting Started in Your New Place for Ordained Ministry." \$4.25 per set plus 10% postage and \$1 handling from United Church Resources, 1400 N. 7 St., St. Louis, MO 63106, 800-325-7061.

News Readers Aver Interest in Religion

Newspaper professionals often claim religion stories are of limited interest to their readers. But preliminary results of a national survey indicate that not only are readers interested in religious news; they are interested in coverage beyond their own faith group and community.

Commissioned by Religious News Service, the study of religion reporting and readership in the press flies in the face of the "conventional wisdom" of newspaper reporters and editors that people are only interested in local stories, reports Judy Weidman, RNS director. She points out that of close to 1,700 newspapers nationwide, most virtually ignore religion news or report only on regional events. Full results are expected in Oct.

Common among papers that excel at religion reporting, she says, is the belief "the religion story is central to interpreting the life of their communities and American culture in general."

Director Beverly Chain says the Office of Communication has succeeded in getting coverage by "speaking appropriately to breaking news" and being ecumenical in its approach. She encourages pastors to develop relationships with broadcast and print media and to be willing to make clear statements about topical events.

Ministers Receive New Deduction on 1989 Taxes

New rules governing the Social Security self-employment tax may result in savings for some clergy. In 1990, the rate increases from 13.02% of income to 15.3%, but clergy will be able to deduct 50% of the Social Security taxes paid on 1989 income as a business expense.

According to information in Prentice-Hall's *Pension and Profit-Sharing Bulletin* and provided by the UCC's Pension Boards, the new rate will bring the self-employed tax into parity with the FICA paid by employees.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

UCC Ponders
Ecumenism, page 3

Calvin Synod & Hawaii
Elect New Conference
Ministers, page 3

Recommended
For a Preschool
Class, page 4

All - New
Priorities
Report, page 2

'I Am Baptized'

By Donald M. Mackenzie, Jr.

Text: "This is my beloved child, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17b)

One of the recurring themes in my work as a pastor is this: We live in a tension between the perception of certainty and the reality of uncertainty.

The perception of certainty, which is so attractive, is reinforced by the media, who suggest to us that with enough time, imagination, energy and money, we can do anything we want to do, have anything we want to have, and--what is more--we deserve it. But underneath that, we share the conviction that life is essentially uncertain; that we cannot safeguard our health or plan for ways to avoid accidents or disasters, nor can we guarantee the outcomes of our choices in life. The only effective response to such a tension is the gospel, which, among other things, is a guide to living in a world of uncertainty.

But we do not tend to make use of the gospel in this way. For many of us, the parts of the gospel which are familiar are useful in reinforcing convictions gained elsewhere about the meaning of life, and thus we have found comfort in the biblical expression of our own longings for security.

While some of that is right and legitimately comforting, we have neglected the more difficult parts of the gospel, the parts which run directly counter to ordinary experience. These parts seem impossible, enigmatic and paradoxical--the healings and signs of power, the Sermon on the Mount and similar sayings, and some of the parables.

We do take comfort from the healings and signs of power, but by themselves, they constitute a mere refuge from uncertainty, rather than an active engagement in an uncertain world. By themselves, they can hardly compare with the hope and healing offered by a saying such as "love your enemies and pray

for those who persecute you."

Perhaps this is why Jesus often cautioned his disciples not to speak publicly of the healing miracles. He knew that we would be likely to be attracted to them as a way of recovering the illusion of the certainty of the past, rather than seeing them as a means toward the future new world promised by God.

But in order to live into those difficult parts of the gospel and to help make them real, we do need some anchor of certainty in this uncertain world. There is something which, in its very hopefulness, vitality, compassion and healing, stabilizes us and fills us with a vision for the future--a vision which is imperfect and incomplete, but still it is there. The certainty this vision can be focused by the use of the word *baptism*.

In times of stress, depression and chaos, Martin Luther reported to have said, "I am baptized." This was Luther's way of locating the one and only true source of comfort and security and certainty in this life, and I would describe it that way: There is a God with a being which has vitality, power, intelligence, compassion and healing. God created the world and loves it and us with a love far beyond our capacity to understand. From the beginning, God has been a caring partner in the continuing act of creation. God created us, loves us and cares for us now and forever. These things constitute the only incomparable certainty in human experience.

Baptism, therefore, is a ritual which gives concreteness to the fact that God has given each one of us the gift of life. This miracle has more power than an eternity of feeble human attempts to create the illusion of certainty. This is the only certainty we require.

As we live in this world of uncertainty, let us take courage and hope from our baptisms and remember that, as God said of Jesus at that first Christian baptism, God also says to us: "You are mine; you are not alone; I love you, and I will care for you. Thanks be to God!"

Donald M. Mackenzie, Jr. is senior pastor of The Church of Christ at Dartmouth College, UCC, Hanover, NH.

Priorities Report

Homeless Poor

A six-day camping experience for 13 homeless youths was provided in July by nine members of the senior high youth group of *First Congregational UCC*, Eugene, OR. The group began its planning in Feb. to raise \$2,000 and served as counselors for the campers.

Integrity of Creation, Justice & Peace

At *St. Matthews UCC*, Evansville, IN, the Sunday School coordinates a program that teaches the youth about recycling and funding local mission. Every Sun-

day, members bring aluminum, plastic, glass and newspapers to go to local recyclers on Monday. Students are urged to come along to see how recycling works. Money earned is donated to an area project for the homeless.

Evangelism and Membership Growth

For *First Spanish UCC*, Chicago, IL, a big part of evangelism centers on education and community development projects. Begun in 1961, the 250-member church has a goal of adding 25 members each year. Community initiatives include a program to teach English, AIDS education and a project to help new Hispanic arrivals purchase homes.

Education

Christ Church, Sexton River, VT, opens its doors for both weekly Sunday School and church services to girls from troubled homes at the nearby Kurn Hat-tin Home. Special measures are taken to integrate the girls into the church fellowship, including a formal program to match them with church families, to be in operation by fall.

OPPOSING VIEW

Responding to June *KYP's* "Theology Forum," WILLIAM PIFER-FOOTE of First Congregational UCC, Sandusky, OH, writes that while he agrees largely with James Werner, he disagrees with the idea that "divorce and other marital and family problems are recent events," with the extended nuclear family the norm.

"For many, this has not been the case," he says, citing people divorced "decades ago," those who left extended families to emigrate or migrate, one-parent families by death, single persons and childless couples. "To imply the concerns have not been with us is to say the church has ignored vital areas of ministry too long."

UC Scene

Former Honeywell chairman EDSO SPENCER, now Ford Foundation chairman, has moved from defending nuclear arms production to seeking a reduction in arms to free funds for human needs. He credits protesters, says the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*--"typified by 'deep-thinking, philosophical people' associated with the UCC"--with changing his views.

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P.O. Box 222198
Dallas, TX 75222

Published ten times per year (except July and August) at 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. Second class postage paid at New York, NY 10001 and additional offices. Prepared by the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ, editorial offices: 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. Postmaster: Send address changes to *KYP* at 105 Madison. ISSN 0361-8668

UCC Leaders Discuss Ecumenism

Unity Votes Have Local Side

General Synod has voted moves toward "visible unity" with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the nine faith bodies in the Consultation on Church Union and the Lutheran Church, but what do these actions mean to local UCC churches?

For one thing, they mean that UCC and Disciples congregations will soon be able more easily to call ministers from the other denomination, says Charles W. Cooper, assistant to the UCC president who represents the church in many ecumenical meetings. "And more churches are likely to perform both adult believers' and infant baptisms," reflective of the other denomination's traditions.

He also predicts that "associations may begin to invite representatives of other UCC communions to participate in ordination councils as ecumenical guests."

Now that the COCU "consensus document" has been approved, the UCC will be led to respond to the group's *Churches in Covenant Communion*, reports Diane Kessler, UCC Council for Ecumenism chair. The consensus statement sets forth the theological basis for forming a covenant, she points out. The covenanting document describes the process to make covenant happen. "This includes creating study groups and 'covenanting councils' at local, regional and national church levels."

The President's Office and Council seek comments on this document from churches and conferences, adds Ms. Kessler. Order it for \$2 plus \$1 postage from COCU, 1 Wall St., Princeton, NJ 08540, 609-921-7866.

What's Next for the National Council?

New structure plans and the resignation of general secretary Arie Brouwer, though painful, have cleared the way for the National Council of Churches to think and act anew on pressing questions of identity and membership, say several UCC observers interviewed by KYP.

Representatives of NCC member churches, convened by a "Transition Team," will meet Sept. 14-16 to start implementing changes approved by the NCC Governing Board. The new NCC will have four units instead of the existing 11. 260 Governing Board members will sit in unit committees, putting them closer to funding and program decisions.

"You can't say all problems are solved by the new structure and resignation," says UC Board for World Ministries executive vice president Scott Libbey, who sits on the "Committee of 15" that proposed restructure. But the developments have "defined new space" for the NCC to plan and act; resolved a dispute over common administrative charges; and reemphasized that the NCC is not itself a church, but a council of churches.

"Ever since the founding of the NCC, we've had a tension between being a communion of communions' and a federation of program agencies," says William McKinney, Hartford Seminary

dean and *American Mainline Religion* co-author. Tight finances have forced the question of what the NCC should be. "All the older Protestant institutions need to ask not how we continue to be what we were, but what we now need to be."

Another urgent question "is to what extent the Council can reach out to new groups, such as Roman Catholics and evangelicals, and to current members who do not support the Council as fully as they should," says Office of Communication director Beverly Chain. She and UC Board for Homeland Ministries executive vice president Charles Shelby Rooks are on the NCC Transition Team.

Visits, Study & Support Can Aid Muslim Relations

Dale Bishop, UC Board for World Ministries Middle East secretary, says churches can take a three-pronged approach to carrying out the recent General Synod resolution calling for closer relationships with the Muslim community.

Dr. Bishop notes that, as they have done with local synagogues, churches can arrange visits where Christians and Muslims can talk about their faith.

He points out that members can "do their own study of Islam," noting Friendship Press' "World of Islam" theme for its educational series this year.

Dr. Bishop also suggests that church members become more sensitive to local Muslim concerns, such as recognition of Muslim holidays by school systems and civil service employers.

Move May Change 'How' of Meetings

The UCC move to Cleveland could make ecumenical relationships more costly, but new technology may eliminate some need for meetings and travel, say a Presbyterian and a Lutheran executive. And a UCC conference minister cautions that "geographic distance from the National Council of Churches" is not a measuring rod for ecumenical effectiveness.

Margaret O. Thomas, interfaith relations associate for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), says last year's move to Louisville has required "a new level of intentionality" about getting together with people who formerly "dropped in" on the church's New York and Atlanta offices.

But ecumenical official Tom Livernois of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which moved to Chicago from Minneapolis, New York and St. Louis, feels cooperation is easier. Conference calls and electronic networking have "changed the face of church meetings," making location "irrelevant," he says.

Thomas Dipko, UCC Ohio Conference minister, says that many churches never headquartered in New York have been some of the best partners in ecumenical relationships. He calls "insensitive" suggestions that communions located elsewhere are less ecumenical. He also notes the NCC was founded in Cleveland.

Calvin Synod, Hawaii Elect New Ministers

The Calvin Synod and Hawaii Conference have elected new ministers.

ZOLTAN D. SZUCS began in June as Calvin Synod bishop.

He will be ordained bishop this month, with Elemer Kocsis, presiding bishop of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Hungary,

present. While serving as bishop, Dr. Szucs continues as pastor of Lorain (OH) Hungarian Reformed Church.

NORMAN W. JACKSON begins work in Hawaii in Oct. Since 1986, he has been executive director of the Council for American Indian Ministry and director of Native American studies adjunct professor at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, New Brighton, MN.



Zoltan Szucs



Norman Jackson

SEND NEWS stories, PHOTOS and OPINIONS of 100 words or less to the Editor, Office of Communication, UCC, 105 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

News Briefs

Nat'l Safety Board Urges Purchase of Safer Buses

A recommendation from the National Transportation Safety Board to groups that transport passengers urges the use of school buses meeting special Federal motor vehicle safety standards set April 1, 1977. Citing a collision last year involving an older church bus that exploded into flames upon impact, the Board points out that school buses manufactured after that date are safer.

UCC*INS Extends Coverage to Small Churches

Churches with an insurable replacement value of \$250,000 or less on their properties, exclusive of parsonage, will now have an opportunity to join the insurance program of the UCC conferences at about 25% less than the normal premium cost. Until now, the minimum payment was beyond the reach of many small churches. The new program will allow full coverage in a combined policy with the local conference. For details, contact your conference office.

Lancaster Seminary Sponsors Business-Religious Dialogue

Bridging the gulf between the worlds of business and religion is the aim of "New Conversations/Dialogue," a group of business people and clergy who meet and discuss issues of faith, work, business and religion. Begun in 1986, the group of 12-15 people meet on UCC-related Lancaster (PA) Theological Seminary's campus monthly to discuss a case study on an ethical or moral issue of personal concern. Topics covered range from South African divestiture to leadership in the local church.

Boy Scouts Provide Liability Coverage to Troop Sponsors

Churches sponsoring Boy Scouts activities on their property have protection against possible lawsuits. A general liability policy of the Boy Scouts of America provides for liability coverage and defense of the church and its officers. The policy resides in the UCC secretary's office. Contact your local council about Girl Scouts' coverage.

Churches Lead Humanitarian Effort in Namibia

Churches are playing a crucial role in the repatriation of Namibian exiles, many of whom have never seen their homeland or who have no home or job to return to, reports the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Council of Churches of Namibia is coordinating the project, with churches supporting five reception centers for returnees and establishing secondary facilities for destitute, disabled and other particularly vulnerable groups.

'UCC Experience' Opens Registration This Month

Plans for "UCC Experience 1990" are shaping up, with registration materials now available from 1400 N. 7 St., St. Louis, MO 63106, 314-621-7374. For conferences 700 miles or farther from Bloomington, IN, where the event is, travel subsidies also are available. Confirmed preachers for the event are Fred B. Craddock of Candler School of Theology and the UCC's Reuben A. Sheares, II; Norman W. Jackson; Ansley Coe Throckmorton, and Paul H. Sherry.



Homeless people are a focus of two projects for funding by the Neighbors in Need Offering, suggested for Oct. 1. Others involve American Indians, AIDS, family violence, minority computer and disability issues, families near nuclear arms plants, poor children and women's economic literacy. (Photo by Steven Mack)

RECOMMENDED

Human Race Club Too educational materials, by child development specialist Joy Berry, help children ages 3-6 tackle behavior problems. Each classroom packet--consisting of teacher's guide, book, audiocassette and 12 sets of activities pages--focuses on a particular topic, such as fighting, teasing or being selfish. Recurring in the materials are six suburban children diverse in racial backgrounds and personalities. Good for preschool church class. Classroom pack is \$32.99; family pack with book, cassette and one set activities pages \$11.99; book and cassette \$10.99, and book alone \$6.99 plus handling. Materials for older children also available. Get catalogue from Living Skills Press, P.O. Box 83, Sebastopol, CA 95473, 707-823-5104.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The **Third Annual Black Church Conference** will be held at Eden Theological Seminary **Sept. 29-30**. Cost is \$12.50; housing not included. Contact E. H. Oglesby at Eden, 475 E. Lockwood Ave., St. Louis, MO 63119, 314-961-3627.

The Alban Institute will conduct workshops on **Managing Difficult Interpersonal Relationships** in churches **Oct. 2-4** in San Francisco and **Oct. 16-18** in Annapolis, MD. Tuition is \$275 for Institute members; \$305 for nonmembers. Room and board range from \$100-\$1100. Contact Roxanne Bartels, Alban Institute, 4125 Nebraska Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20016, 800-457-8803.

"Pastoral Care: A Ministry of Healing" is the theme of **National Pastoral Care Week, Oct. 23-29**. For resources, contact John Gleason, Congress on Ministry in Specialized Settings, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482, 215-768-2447.

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